

LET'S TAKE A DRIVE TO MOUNT GAMBIER!



Every two years the MX-5 Clubs of South Australia and Victoria get together somewhere near the border to spend a weekend of good food, good wine, good company and good roads.

This year the event was held on the weekend of 2 -3 October in the magnificent town of Mount Gambier.

Twelve Victorians made the journey west in four MX-5s and two family cars. From Geelong, Robyn

and Theo Scheen and from Torquay, Coral and Bill Campbell had the enviable drive along the coast to Mount Gambier, whilst Sue Dixon and Ernie de Vlieger, and Meriden and I drove over from Melbourne via Ballarat. The Biffins, Kayleen and Chris, and the Morrisises, Linda and Ian packed the kids into the big cars and drove over to join the fun.

Mount Gambier is best known for the Blue Lake, an extinct volcano that is filled with mineral rich water,

which as the name suggests is an intense cerulean shade. After a drive around the lake with a photo opportunity thrown in, and a tour of the pumping station, which provides Mount Gambier with its water, the serious business of driving great roads had to be tackled.

Jan and Bryan Harris of the South Australian MX-5 Club arranged the weekend, and they chose a terrific route from Mount Gambier to the famed wine growing region of the Coonawarra and lunch at the Katnook Winery. The roads of the South East of South Australia are beautifully quiet and well maintained. Perfect for a convoy of MX-5s intent on getting to lunch quickly.

Lunch was the first opportunity the eleven South Australian delegates and the twelve Victorians (plus four junior members) had to sit down and get to know each other. Sitting under a willow tree enjoying a light lunch and a glass of the local vintage is hard to beat at the best of times.

Ernie de Vlieger had a glint in his eye as he chose to lead a delegation of Victorians on a wine sampling tour of the Coonawarra. It seems Ernie loves his

reds, and he guided a bunch of Coonawarra first timers to a few of his favourite haunts. Whilst not quite on first name terms with the cellar door staff he demonstrated a familiarity with the local product that indicated years of intensive research.

The group united on Saturday evening at the restaurant of the Commodore Motel in Mount Gambier for a meal and a few more of the local wines. Between courses some quizzes were circulated and it didn't take long for the interstate rivalry to rise to the fore. In the first round Meriden James used all her experience to take the prize, whilst Ernie upheld the honours taking the second round. Two more trophies leave South Australia bound for Victoria!

After a slow start (caused by a combination of late night and maybe a few wines) the convoy headed south to the coast and morning tea at Port MacDonnell.

With the sun beating down, the convoy, suitably refreshed, headed east along the coastal route towards Nelson, just across the border in Victoria. Unusually, this route covered some gravel motoring (eat your heart out Chris Halek) which being such a





great road surface drew no complaints.

The last official gathering of the combined Clubs was lunch overlooking the lagoon at Nelson. All agreed that the gathering was a great success.

Many thanks to Jan and Bryan Harris and Lyn and Roger Trethewey for organising the weekend, and to all that attended for making it a memorable

weekend.

2001 is Victoria's turn to organise the joint gathering of the Clubs and already some discussion is going around about venues, with Mildura being a strong contender.

*Words by David James,
Pictures from the MX-5 Club of South Australia*

